

A POSTHUMOUS TRIBUTE TO
ERNESTINE THOMAS MORRISON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mrs. Ernestine Thomas Morrison. Mrs. Morrison was a distinguished member of the Brooklyn, New York community. It behooves us to pay tribute posthumously to this outstanding leader and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing her impressive accomplishments.

Ernestine Thomas Morrison was born on June 8, 1935 in Birmingham, Alabama to Virginia Kirkland Allen Thomas and Ernest Thomas. During her early childhood years, she lived in Birmingham and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania after the death of her father, who passed away when she was just 2 years-old. At age 12, her mother passed on and Ernestine went to live in Brooklyn, NY with her sister and brother-in-law, Cleopatra Allen Riley and Clifford Riley. Although her sister was just 22 years-old, Ernestine recognized her not only as her sister, but as a mother. Ernestine attended P.S. 41 and graduated from the old Girls High School in Brooklyn. She married the late Roscoe Morrison, a Korean War veteran and later they had three children, Ruth, Lavinia and Charles.

Mrs. Morrison more than loved her children; she doted over them, as they were her life. While they were in elementary school, she worked part-time in the schools that they attended to be certain that her children had the best teachers and received the best services that the schools had to offer. All who knew her, knew that her love for children went beyond her own children, as she adopted her friends' children, her children's friends, her clients, her clients' kids etc., and she had the pictures to prove it.

She was elected president of the Parent Teachers Association at P.S. 243 and JHS 210; and in those roles she served as a member of the local school board for Districts 16 and 17. Additionally, she managed a summer recreation program for the youth of Albany Houses, which included several athletic teams that competed against other teams from the housing developments around New York City. Mrs. Morrison coached the Albany Houses Girls' Volleyball Team and as a first-time coach, her beloved team brought home the city championship trophy.

Mrs. Morrison was a strong voice for African-American studies in schools and open enrollment. She compelled the principal of her children's elementary school to not only order more black history books, but to allow the children to borrow those books that were already in the library. She worked with Reverend Milton A. Galamison on open enrollment for New York City public schools, a tumultuous issue of that time. Mrs. Morrison's activism in the NYC school system presented her with the opportunity to meet on several occasions with the late Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. Open enrollment in New York City went from a concept to a reality and children all over the city were now able to attend schools outside of their neighborhoods. It was no surprise that Mrs. Morrison's activism led her to politics. She was a very active member of Unity Democratic

Club. She worked on the campaigns of the then Assemblywoman Shirley Chisholm, who later became the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress. Other elected officials she worked with included the late Assemblyman Thomas R. Fortune; District Leader Narcissus Frett; Judges Thomas R. Jones, James Shaw and James Hutchinson; Assemblyman Edward Griffith and Congressman EDOLPHUS "ED" TOWNS.

She was also a member of Community Planning Board 5, which covers East New York, Spring Creek and Cypress Hills.

As her children grew older, she started a career in social work with the New York City Human Resources Administration. After her retirement in 1992, she went back to live in her birth home of Birmingham, Alabama, the place that she loved so dearly and longed to go back to. After being away for 50 years, Mrs. Morrison was in for a rude awakening. She was a New Yorker, no longer a Southerner and she didn't quite fit into the Southern lifestyle. Consequently, in 1999, she returned home to Brooklyn.

On Friday, August 22, 2003, God called home one of his best soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the accomplishments of Mrs. Ernestine Thomas Morrison as she spent many years offering her love, talents and services for the betterment of our local and national communities.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Ernestine Thomas Morrison's selfless service continuously demonstrated a level of altruistic dedication that makes her most worthy of our recognition today.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO LARRY
WILLIAMS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments and service contributions of Larry Williams, Veterans Services Coordinator for U.S. VETS—Las Vegas.

Mr. Williams has risen above the challenges of life and has triumphed over adversity to become a leader in the ranks of the U.S. VETS and as a 2005 AmeriCorps alum. AmeriCorps is the only national service collaboration serving homeless veterans. Before his service with AmeriCorps, Larry was a recipient of their charity. On July 29, 2003, an AmeriCorps member reached out to him, providing guidance and service. Larry attributes this simple act of compassion from Ron Bass as his turning point from hopelessness to a renewed life and future.

Just 3 months later, in October 2003, Larry was able to begin his journey of recovery upon entering the U.S. VETS—Los Angeles program. It was here over a 10-month period that he started to regain his independence and embark upon his own service within the Compensated Work Therapy Program. During this time he began to dream of helping other people in the way he had been helped by becoming an AmeriCorps member himself. Within a year, after being reunited with his wife and children in Las Vegas, Nevada, that dream of helping others came true.

Larry's service in AmeriCorps Outreach allowed him to meet with homeless veterans and non-veterans alike on the streets of Las Vegas, in shelters and in desert camps. It is estimated by the Veterans Administration that there are 4,300 homeless veterans in Las Vegas alone. With one in every three adult homeless males being classified as a military veteran, Larry's personal journey has made the time and attention he renders a priceless contribution in helping to alleviate these unfortunate statistics. As Veterans Service Coordinator for U.S. VETS in Las Vegas, he provides clinical support services to approximately 450 veterans in a given year while also providing the support needed to help them plan for successful and stable living. Larry also provides residential and moral support for formerly homeless Veterans living at U.S. VETS.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Larry Williams for his shining example of hope and service. He truly is a success story that deserves to be told. I applaud his service and dedication and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING RETIRING SUISUN
CITY MAYOR JIM SPERING

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Suisun City mayor, Jim Spering, who after serving 20 years as the mayor of Suisun City will be stepping down to assume his newly elected position as the Solano County supervisor for District Three in January.

Under the leadership of Jim Spering, the city of Suisun constructed a new city hall on the waterfront, symbolizing Suisun City's transformation from what the San Francisco Chronicle rated as "the worst city to live in" to what is now considered a jewel on the water. City hall, which for many years was located in a trailer, was "the only city hall in California that was registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles." The city now contains some of the best public spaces in the county, has a vibrant downtown, the quality of housing has improved tremendously, and the city's crime rate has dropped dramatically.

Similar to Billy Beane, the general manager of his favorite team, the Oakland Athletics, Jim has been creative in finding innovative solutions during times of fiscal stress.

In addition to his leadership position on the Suisun City council, Jim Spering has assumed a leadership role on regional transportation issues. This has earned him the reputation as Solano County's "go to guy" on transportation matters. Jim Spering has been past chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the 9-county San Francisco Bay area region and is currently on the board. At the MTC, Jim helped found the Transportation for Livable Communities Program which provides incentives for pedestrian and transit-oriented developments that strengthen the link between transportation, land use and community goals.

Jim Spering has also represented Suisun City or Solano County on several boards and commissions including the City Housing Authority, the Solano Transportation Authority,

and District, and Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Board. Jim has been a tremendous asset to the city of Suisun and Solano County as one of their most experienced and valued mayors. His efforts earned for him the high esteem of his associates and the appreciation of the public.

As Jim Sperring steps down as mayor of Suisun City, I would like to thank him and his wife Pam for their commitment and service to the community of Suisun City. I wish Jim the best of luck in his new leadership role on the Solano County board of supervisors.

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF
MR. RICHARD W. DURST

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Richard W. Durst, as he assumes the role of president of Baldwin-Wallace College, an extraordinary institution of higher learning in Berea, OH.

Mr. Durst comes to the Cleveland area after 6 years as dean of the College of Arts and Architecture and executive director of University Arts Services at the Pennsylvania State University. He will undoubtedly succeed in continuing to build Baldwin-Wallace's academic recognition, especially in the areas of arts, music, and theater as an international expert in theater set design and the role of the arts in academic training.

His creative work has been featured in group exhibitions in Beijing and Seoul, and he was invited to design the world premiere of The Belltower for the Paris Opera. He also was the codesigner of the United States' exhibit for the 1999 Prague Quadrennial, the world's largest and most prestigious exhibition of theater design and theater architecture.

He brings to B-W demonstrated strengths in curriculum development and review, administration, recruitment and retention planning, fund raising and facilities construction and management. He has already received distinction for receptiveness, presence, and academic stature which has connected with all of the portions of the college community.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognition and welcome to Mr. Richard W. Durst, an individual with both significant academic accomplishments and a record of community involvement which will positively add to the campus community of Baldwin-Wallace and the Cleveland area in general, and I look forward to working with him to further enrich the College and all elements of higher education.

HONORING BETTY ORTEN

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of Mrs. Betty Orten, a great Coloradan who passed away on November 24, 2006, the day after a spirited Thanksgiving celebration with her fam-

ily. She demonstrated great leadership and social conscience in civic affairs and will be missed by friends and loved ones.

Betty Orten grew up on military posts as her father's career as an Army officer took his family across the country, overseas, and finally to Colorado. Betty graduated from high school in Colorado Springs and then went on to receive a degree in history and sociology from the University of Colorado. While at the University of Colorado, she met her future husband, Russell Sage Orten. In 1951, they married and made their home in Westminster, Colorado.

After graduation, Betty began a career as a social worker and also became involved in the Democratic Party. She served as a precinct committeewoman, Democratic State vice chairperson, Adams County Democratic chairperson, and Democratic National Committee member. In 1974, after all of her hard-earned experience in social work and politics, she was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives.

Betty served as a representative for four terms, as well as one term as the House caucus chairwoman. Throughout her career, she concentrated on issues concerning the disadvantaged. She focused on dental care for the elderly, help for battered women and displaced homemakers, housing for single-parent families, and child care for single moms.

Those who knew Betty have fond memories and undoubtedly recognize her remarkable impact on them and fellow Coloradans along with Colorado politics. Betty was a role model and an example for women as she took leadership roles and worked tirelessly for the disadvantaged. Betty was always thoughtful, honest, and persuasive in work and politics.

In 1997, I had the privilege to be a representative in the Colorado House of Representatives where inspiring stories of Betty's labors and personality still resound. She was a true pioneer who broke new ground throughout her political career and in her numerous leadership positions.

If the measure of a life well-led is the impact that a person has on others, then Betty's impact is broad and deep. We all owe her a debt of gratitude and respect, and I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating and remembering a life of service while expressing our deepest sympathies for her family's loss.

IN HONOR OF ALFIE TEWFICK
KHALIL

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a good friend and great American who passed away tragically on November 18, 2006. Alfie Tewfick Khalil was a native of Egypt who came to this country in the late 1960s. In 1979, Alfie joined the faculty of the Monterey-based Defense Language Institute (DLI) where he taught Arabic to U.S. military personnel. He soon stood out as a leader among the DLI faculty. In 1980, he became a shop steward with AFGE Local 1263, the union representing the DLI faculty. By 1987, he was elected president of Local 1263.

In the post 9-11 world, foreign language is a national security tool. In 2005, General John

Abizaid, Commander of U.S. Central Command, testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, that the "ability to cross the cultural divide is not an Army issue. It is a national issue. We have to be able to deal with the people in the rest of the world as the globe shrinks in terms of communication and problem solving and sharing." DLI plays an indispensable role in moving this defense strategy forward. But DLI can't do it without its faculty. They are native speakers of their mother languages who, like Alfie, come from the distant places all over the globe to help our Nation better defend itself.

Alfie understood this and made the advocacy for DLI faculty and staff his life's work. After my first election to Congress, I learned quickly that there were two people I needed to know at DLI: the commandant, a Colonel so and so who would retire or move on in a year or two, and Alfie, who would always be there. Alfie made his presence felt in so many ways.

One of the best examples of this was his hard work on behalf of "locality pay"—the small salary boost for Federal workers based in particularly high cost areas. Alfie pointed out that Monterey County was, indeed, one of those areas, but that the Federal Government still considered it rural so DLI faculty were paid at much lower rates. Alfie and I worked together for more than 3 years to secure a decision by the Office of Personnel Management that Monterey County-based civil service workers deserved locality pay. This hard work on Alfie's part has helped DLI attract and retain the best language teachers in the world.

Alfie was about more than pay at DLI, however. He was about professionalism. That became clear in the recent fight to keep DLI off the base closure list. Alfie was a never-ending resource to my office and the BRAC Commission. He provided information and statistics on the level of expertise and depth of training of the DLI faculty. With this information it was easy to make the case that DLI could not be recreated anywhere else—that it was dependent on and unique to the talent of the Monterey area. Alfie was a key player in keeping DLI open and in Monterey.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for the entire House in sharing our most sincere condolences to Alfie's family both here in the United States and in Egypt and to his extended family of students and colleagues throughout the DLI community.

HONORING NYS ASSEMBLY MA-
JORITY LEADER PAUL A.
TOKASZ

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the career in public service of an outstanding representative of the residents of Western New York—retiring New York State Assembly Majority Leader Paul A. Tokasz.

Paul Tokasz served honorably as Member of Assembly in the 143rd District from the time of his initial election in a special election in 1988 to this very day. Paul will end his service in the State Assembly at the end of this year.